

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM


DATE: MAY 8, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

THRU: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER

FROM: EILEEN FOGARTY, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: UPPER POTOMAC WEST WORK GROUP MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2002



I would like to invite you to attend the next meeting of the Upper Potomac West Work Group on Thursday, May 16, 2002. The meeting will be held at the Birchmere, 3901 Mount Vernon Avenue, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to continue the work on the long-term vision for the neighborhood. Specifically, the agenda for the meeting will include:

- Review of long-term ideas and concepts developed at the March 21 meeting.
- Discussion of synthesized/alternative long-term concepts
- Review of elements and ideas for the Mount Vernon street plan

In addition, at the beginning of the meeting, we will briefly discuss the "Community Issues and Potential Short-Term Approaches" document prepared in the smaller subgroups, with the focus on whether there need to be any additional subgroup meetings regarding short-term issues. City Council received a copy of this document several weeks ago.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions or wish additional information on this planning effort.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 6, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

FROM: EILEEN FOGARTY, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING *E Fogarty*

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON UPPER POTOMAC WEST PLANNING ACTIVITY

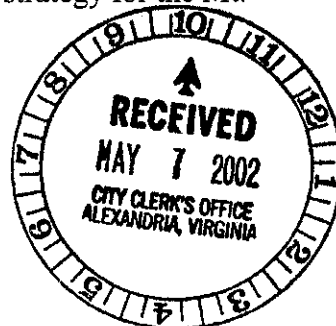
The purpose of this memorandum is to update you on the activity of the Upper Potomac West work group. Over the past few months, the work group has been working in two smaller subcommittees, with one group focused on the residential area and one on the commercial area. These two subcommittees have been working on the identification of short-term issues and strategies to address those issues. There have been some areas of overlap with common issues identified, so that as we move closer to finalizing the strategies, the groups are now working with one document. Planning, Code Enforcement, Police and T&ES staff have been active participants in the work of the subcommittees. In addition, there have been several working sessions of the full group to identify long-term improvements that would help to improve the neighborhood.

In order to give you an idea of the direction of the group at this time, attached is a draft of the community issues and potential short-term approaches document. It includes suggested parking and pedestrian improvements along W. Glebe Road. Recommendations for such improvements along Mt. Vernon Avenue are currently being developed as part of the street design/concept plan for Mt. Vernon Avenue.

Also attached with this memorandum is a sheet outlining the "Next Steps" that are currently underway. Planning staff is in the process of developing a concept plan for the neighborhood that will be discussed with the full work group at their next meeting, scheduled for Thursday, May 16. Working with a business development specialist, staff is organizing workshops with businesses to be held in June to aid in the development of a business/retail strategy for the Mt. Vernon shopping corridor in Arlandria.

Attachment

cc: Planning Commission



ARLANDRIA

UPPER POTOMAC WEST WORK GROUP COMMUNITY ISSUES AND POTENTIAL SHORT TERM APPROACHES

ISSUE: Pedestrian orientation of Mt. Vernon Avenue

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

Short term: Explore and inventory existing pedestrian-oriented features of Mt. Vernon Avenue; assess transportation and other trade offs associated with this type of orientation

- Develop street design plan to articulate pedestrian-oriented elements, i.e. street furniture and lighting, bicycle racks, bus shelters, special sidewalk pavers, signage, landscaping and so forth and incorporate the adopted Mt. Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines
- Encourage removal of the flood wall at Lillian's restaurant, and the design of a pedestrian environment along that portion of the street frontage.

- Long term:
- Prioritize street design improvements and secure funding of them, in phases if necessary, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
 - Seek ways to offer loans and/or grants to businesses to make improvements to their respective properties that support the design plan.
 - Undertake necessary process with FEMA to adjust the flood plain boundary.

ISSUE: Traffic study is necessary to understand problems and to identify solutions.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Short term:
- Conduct traffic study to include specific problems identified by the work group:
 - Blinking light and free-flow right from south-bound Mount Vernon Ave onto Russell Rd.
 - Need to slow down traffic on Mt. Vernon Ave
 - Evaluate signalized crosswalk at W. Reed and Mt. Vernon Avenue
 - Evaluate existing crosswalks
 - Inventory the appropriate location for crosswalks.

- Evaluate implications and safety concerns for the placement of a mid-block crosswalk on W. Glebe Road in the block between Russell Rd. and Mt. Vernon Ave.
- Work with Arlington County regarding the possible creation of a left-turn arrow at Mt. Vernon Ave. onto S. Glebe Rd.
- Evaluate potential relocation of bus stops on W. Glebe Rd. to coordinate with crosswalks
- Evaluate left turn movement and signalization from W. Glebe Road onto Russell Rd.
- Evaluate traffic signal progression to reduce speeding on Mt. Vernon Avenue between Four Mile Road and Executive Ave.
- Relocate the stop bar along Mt. Vernon Ave. south at Bruce St.
- Explore the creation of nubs at bus stops and the ability to add parking spaces adjacent to the nubs
- Prepare design and implement improvements for Mt. Vernon Ave./Glebe Rd. intersection

Long term:

- Prioritize improvements and put in Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for funding.

ISSUE: Lack of commercial and residential parking

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

Short term:

- Inventory existing on-street parking and add additional spaces where possible:
 - 57 spaces on W. Glebe Rd. (by Dominion VA)
 - 5 spaces on W. Glebe Rd.
 - 2 spaces from existing taxi stand on Four Mile Rd.
 - 37 spaces on east side of Old Dominion Blvd.
 - 102 new residential spaces
- Maintain 2-3 spaces at taxi stand on Four Mile Road during day and evening hours. Allow parking in two spaces between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.
- Inventory and evaluate on-street parking along Mt. Vernon Ave. seeking to increase the available parking, especially during off-peak traffic hours
- Alter existing language on parking signs adjacent to restaurants on Mt. Vernon Ave. to extend two-hour parking from 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.
- Explore other options like shared, paid parking, and other

- off-street parking in the short term
 - Facilitate a working group to explore the mechanism/ consideration for shared parking, and liability and other related issues, with Birchmere, St. Rita's Church and other sites
 - If present contract on Datatel site does not go through, retain the \$2,000,000 in the City budget for acquisition and demolition of the Datatel building
- Mid term:
- Develop surface parking on appropriate vacant sites
 - Add 28 parking spaces on Executive Ave. south of Glebe Rd. as depicted in attached plan prepared by T&ES
- Long term:
- Develop a public parking structure.

ISSUE: Lighting improvement for pedestrian and roadway safety

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Short term:
- T&ES work closely with Dominion Virginia regarding the repair of broken/non-working street lights and monitor the status of the repairs.
 - Inventory and determine lighting study areas
 - In conjunction with the street plan, review lighting for pedestrians and roadway and recommend appropriate fixtures
 - Work with adjoining property owners to assess complimentary private property options
- Long term:
- Include funding of any new light fixtures in Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to fund installation of new fixtures.

ISSUE: Pedestrian safety

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Short term:
- Install traffic signal at intersection of Old Dominion and W. Glebe Road
 - Provide pedestrian count down signal at intersection of W. Glebe Rd. and Old Dominion Blvd.
 - Provide walk signal at the intersection of Russell and Mt. Vernon Ave. and a crosswalk at W. Reed Ave. and Mt. Vernon Ave.
 - Implement pedestrian safety measures on W. Glebe Rd. as

- depicted in attached plan prepared by T&ES
- Install in-pavement pedestrian lighting at crosswalks along W. Glebe Rd. as shown on attached plan prepared by T&ES, and along Mt. Vernon Ave. where crosswalks are determined to be appropriate
- Install speed table in the 700 block of Four Mile Road, and at Four Mile Road and Old Dominion, in accordance with T&ES traffic calming work program

ISSUE: Adequacy of public trash receptacles and trash disposal

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Short term: • Inventory trash receptacles for volume and problems
- On-going: • Continue to monitor trash receptacles in Four Mile Run Park and along Mt. Vernon Ave.
- Add trash containers where needed along Mt. Vernon Ave. as needed
- Continue Code Enforcement efforts to actively pursue investigations of trash dumping

ISSUE: The area, especially the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor, needs a special cleaning

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Short term: • To facilitate street cleaning along Mt. Vernon Ave., cleaning-canvas businesses to determine an appropriate time frame for street cleaning and install signage
- On-going: • Continue a street cleaning schedule of twice a week
- Continue and promote the twice weekly schedule for the street infrastructure worker
- Maintain a weed-free environment and plant ground cover in the bald spots of the planting beds in the public right-of-way

ISSUE: The newspaper and vending boxes along Mt. Vernon Avenue need attention.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Short term: • Inventory existing boxes.
- Remove boxes that impede sidewalk access or are a safety issue.

- Remove boxes that are used to hide alcoholic beverages
- Negotiate voluntary agreement with vendors (similar to Old Town agreement) to limit size, location, shape, color, content.

ISSUE: **Increase coordination within the neighborhood to resolve specific service issues**

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Short term: • Beginning in May through early September, neighborhood inspection team to inspect the entire Upper Potomac West area at least once every two weeks; the frequency of these inspections after September will be evaluated at that time. Review team will consist of the following agencies: Code Enforcement, Planning and Zoning, T&ES, and other agencies as needed as specific issues/problems arise
- On-going: • City agencies continue to bring issues to the Citywide Code Compliance Abatement Committee
- Continue Code Enforcement twice weekly walk through of the neighborhood including Mt. Vernon Ave.
- City staff will continue to elevate awareness to all employees who work in this area of the All Eyes Program and emphasize use of the program and take a more vigilant approach to resolving issues in the neighborhood
- Long term: • Explore a street manager for Mt. Vernon Ave.

ISSUE: **Increase community outreach to raise awareness about how to contact the appropriate City agencies regarding a particular concern or problem**

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Short term: • Develop approach to raise awareness for residential and business community. Involve the Department of Human Services multi-cultural coordinator in its development
- Create packages of information for the residential and business community in English and Spanish and work directly with community groups and churches to distribute information
- Share information with ESL adults at GW Middle School and Mt. Vernon Elementary
- Promote the awareness and use of the Nuisance Abatement Hotline

- Inform community of trash pick up times, spring clean up pick ups

ISSUE: Police presence in the area to address issues such as vandalism, car theft, prostitution, and public drinking.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

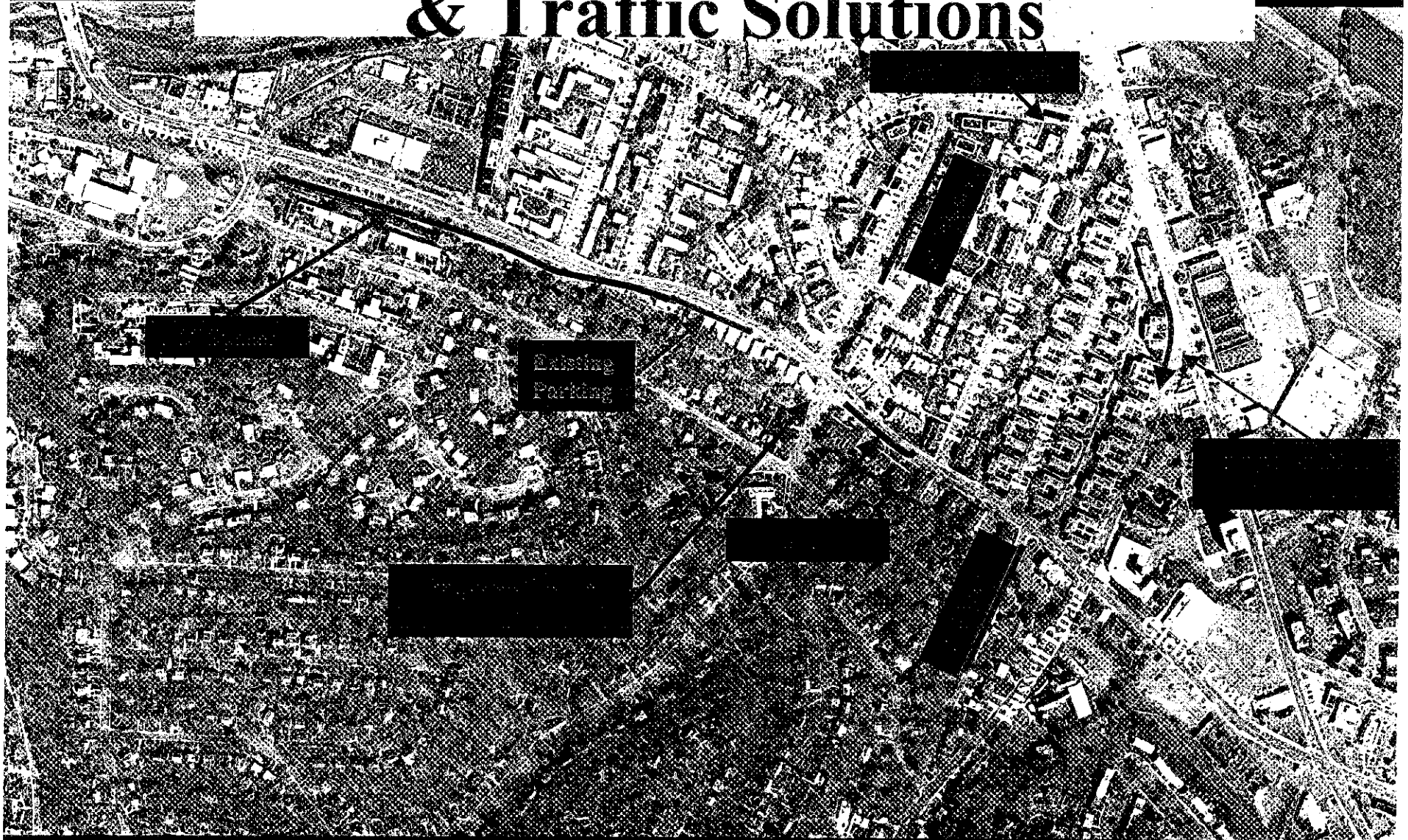
- Short term:
- Maintain the existing Police presence with two community policing officers.
 - Implement and maintain a Police satellite office, as planned, within the Mt. Vernon Village Center
 - Employ Police to direct traffic at Birchmere to ensure that patrons can safely exit the property (sight distance problem with cars parked on either side of the driveway apron)
 - Develop Neighborhood Watch program at Old Dominion and Tennessee and other areas, as needed
- On-going:
- Police and Parks and Recreation to continue to monitor the park area for illegal activities such as cooking, drinking and trespassing at night

ISSUE: Overcrowding/Rooming Houses/Code compliance of rental properties

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- On-going:
- Continue Code Enforcement work with resident property managers and other concerned citizens to identify and resolve situations where overcrowding or illegal rooming houses are being operated
 - City staff to identify overcrowding when observed
 - Continue education process with resident managers about reporting known instances of overcrowding and/or rooming houses and that failure to do so will result in charges being brought against both the resident manager and the occupants

Proposed Short-Term Parking & Traffic Solutions



Transportation & Environmental Services

Pedestrian Plan



Transportation & Environmental Services

Upper Potomac West **THE VISION**

THE NEXT STEPS

DEFINING A DIRECTION FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

- ***Finalize Short-Term Issues and Actions***
 - Trash and service concerns
 - Lighting, safety and police presence
 - Overcrowding/inadequate parking
 - Parking/traffic/pedestrian concerns
- ***Prepare Concept Plan for the Neighborhood***
 - Areas for infill development
 - Pedestrian linkages
 - Connections to the park
 - Defining Elements - gateways
 - Sidewalk/streetscape guidelines
 - Shared/new parking opportunities
- ***Develop Business/Retail Strategy***
 - Assess market conditions and potentials
 - Work with businesses and other groups (PWBA, AEDP, etc) to identify needs/ideas
 - Prepare strategic plan, including:
 - Use recommendations
 - Maintaining/complementing existing retail
 - Storefront improvements
 - Business promotions
 - Organization and management
 - Outdoor events
 - Targeted marketing
 - Develop implementation measures